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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [ASEC](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: NEW PM GIVES FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE, BEGINS
NEGOTIATIONS ON CABINET

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 1093
[1](#)B. 07 PORT AU PRINCE 1678

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Thomas C. Tighe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In her first press conference as Prime Minister, Michele Pierre-Louis broadly outlined her goals for the next government, which include addressing problems of national production, health, education and security, and moving quickly to attend to the high cost of living, delayed Senate elections, and the national budget. Pierre-Louis and President Preval also met with political parties to begin negotiating the composition of her cabinet. The parties are using their draft "'governability pact'" as a jumping-off point for the negotiations, though Preval has reportedly vowed he will never sign on to the pact itself. Meanwhile, outgoing Prime Minister Alexis officially took control of the Lespwa Platform, placing him in a position to engage in the negotiations between the new PM and political parties. Though the process of forming a cabinet and presenting a general government platform could still take several weeks, Embassy believes Pierre-Louis' immediate move to negotiate with parties and communicate with the public is a positive sign. End summary.

Pierre-Louis Gives First Press Conference

[1](#)2. (U) While the Alexis government continued liquidating current affairs, newly ratified Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis on August 5 gave her first official press conference. Pierre-Louis broadly outlined her goals for her government, emphasizing compromise and cohesiveness throughout. The major themes she plans to address in her general policy are national production, infrastructure, tourism, energy, education, health, justice and security, regional development, and unemployment. She listed as immediate priorities preparations for the reopening of schools in September, a time when many families feel additional financial pressure; finishing the national budget, as the fiscal year ends September 30; launching elections for one-third of the Senate; and addressing the high cost of living. Pierre-Louis cited the need for her government to have a "'plan of action'" that will achieve results, and

promised to that end a ''roadmap'' for each government ministry. She said she will form her declaration of general policies based on broad consultations to reflect the concerns of multiple sectors. However, she stated she could not at present set a date for her presentation of policies before Parliament.

¶3. (U) Pierre-Louis also touched on the status of her and Preval's negotiations with political parties over the composition of her cabinet. She said negotiations ''will take some time'' but that she and the President are open to a compromise that permits government cohesion. She specifically mentioned the importance of maintaining a good relationship with Parliament.

¶4. (C) Haitian business leader George Sassine (protect) told Econoff August 5 that the press conference was ''great'' and that Pierre-Louis had astutely pointed out that the very political parties that are fighting for a place in the government are also destabilizing the government through their bargaining for cabinet posts. Chamber of Deputies President Eric Jean-Jacques (Lespwa, Tabarre/West) publicly urged Pierre-Louis to present her policies as soon as possible so the government could move forward with addressing urgent issues.

PM, President Meet Political Parties

¶5. (C) President Preval and PM Pierre-Louis met on August 4 with leaders of Haiti's major political parties to discuss the composition of Pierre-Louis' cabinet and the contents of her general platform. The initial focus is on the division of ministries between political parties and the method for

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doing so. (Note: There are 19 parties represented in Parliament and only 18 government ministries, so not every political party can participate. Major parties vying for positions include OPL (Struggling People's Organization), Fusion, LAAA (Artibonite in Action), Alyans, Union, Fanmi Lavalas, and the President's own Lespwa Platform. End note.)

OPL President Edgard Leblanc stated OPL would like to retain OPL loyalist Paul Antoine Bien-Aime as Minister of Education.

Union currently holds the Ministry of Environment, and leader Chavanne Jeune has said he would like to maintain that post. Evans Paul, leader of Alyans, has said he does not/not want Alyans to keep the Ministry of Commerce. Fusion spokesperson Micha Gaillard denied Fusion is set on keeping the Ministry of Health under Fusion leadership. Instead, Fusion will submit to the President a variety of candidates for ministerial posts. The process has led to some confusion as to who officially speaks for the parties. For instance, Fanmi Lavalas Senator Rudy Heriveaux (West Department) is participating in the meetings as the representative of Lavalas, but other members of his party do not all agree he should be their representative.

¶6. (SBU) Political parties are using their ''Governability Pact,'' a proposed protocol between the parties, the PM and the President, as a point of departure in negotiations. Primarily drafted by the leadership of Fusion with input from other major parties, the pact calls for ''equitable participation'' of political parties in the government, in proportion to their representation in Parliament. It emphasizes government solidarity and cohesion as prerequisites for stability and progress, and also outlines three major policy objectives. The first is the strengthening of state institutions, including increasing the professionalism of the HNP, creating a ''new national defense force,'' and reinforcing Parliament, the judicial system, decentralized state structures and the electoral council. The second theme is strengthening democracy and rule of law, to include instituting dialogue as a means of conflict resolution, developing of a 25-year plan, strengthening political parties, and creating consensus around amending the

constitution. Lastly, the pact calls for socio-economic reform to revive national production, improve irrigation, increase access to basic education and health care, protect the environment and lower the cost of living through food rations or subsidies.

¶7. (C) Fusion spokesperson Micha Gaillard told Poloff August 6 that the August 4 meeting 'ended badly.' He said Preval criticized the parties' 'Governability Pact' and vowed he would not sign it. According to Gaillard, the President reprimanded two parties in particular)- OPL and Fusion)- for sowing political instability. Gaillard said he doubted the President would facilitate Pierre-Louis' task of forming a government. Fusion is not concerned about the government's major policy priorities, as Pierre-Louis' ideas mesh with their own. However, they are highly concerned about creating a government team that is equitable as well as unified and effective. Gaillard said the parties had not spoken with the President or PM about specific cabinet posts.

Ex-PM Alexis New Leader of Lespwa

¶8. (U) An assembly of Lespwa leaders met August 2 and elected former PM Jacques-Edouard Alexis national coordinator of the platform. (Note: President Preval was elected under the Lespwa banner in 2006. It remains a 'political platform' composed of two regional political parties and two rural organizations, rather than a standard political party. See ref B.) Outgoing Minister of Haitians Living Abroad Jean Geneus, outgoing Minister for Parliamentary Relations Joseph Jasmin, and Senator Joseph Lambert (Southeast Department) will also be part of the new Lespwa leadership council. As the formal leader of Lespwa, Alexis is now potentially in a position to negotiate with PM Pierre-Louis and President Preval over Lespwa's share of cabinet posts.

¶9. (C) Comment: Pierre-Louis seems to have made a good first impression, immediately speaking to the public about

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her plans for the new government. She faces enormous challenges in the wake of nearly four months of a caretaker government, coupled with mounting fuel and food prices. The policies Pierre-Louis laid out and those described by the political parties are not, on the surface, incompatible. Negotiations over cabinet posts, however, are highly sensitive and could be time consuming. Some of the political parties tend to mistrust Preval and are quick to criticize, and though they claim to seek solidarity with the government for the good of Haiti, there always appears an element of self-interest at work. Alexis' continuing presence on the scene adds another uncertain element to the mix.

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